

Study: Plan for freeway just Band-Aid

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The Arizona Republic

Dec. 22, 2007 12:00 AM

A new traffic study shows the proposed South Mountain Freeway would ease congestion in Ahwatukee, but it won't be a cure-all for Valley freeway problems.

The \$1.7 billion freeway would run along the Pecos Road alignment in Ahwatukee and cut through South Mountain Park, connecting to Interstate 10 at 55th Avenue.

The study, presented by HDR [Engineering](#), predicted what traffic would look like in 2030 with and without the freeway.

Without the new freeway, 36 percent of the Valley's major freeways would be highly congested during morning traffic times. If the freeway is built, that number would fall to 32 percent.

The projections showed that the freeway would relieve congestion at small spots along I-10 near Tolleson, I-10 northbound near Chandler and Ahwatukee and on northbound Loop 101 south of U. S. 60.

"There is no one solution to the freeway problem," said Tim Tait, the Arizona Department of Transportation's community-relations director. "This is what we believe is part of the overall solution."

One member of the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team said the study raised concerns for him about how worthwhile the project is.

"There's really not that big of a difference," said John Rodriguez of Ahwatukee Foothills.

Though the new freeway probably would not reduce the level of congestion at some of the worst spots, it is expected to reduce the amount of time drivers are stuck in traffic, said Amy Edwards, HDR project manager.

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